

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 7, 2023, 5:30 p.m, Old Schoolhouse Common and Zoom

Present: Selectboard members Richard Baker, Christopher Martin, and Michele Gonzales; Town Clerk Bobbi Brimblecombe; Visitors: Robert Harnish, Norman Cohen, Henry Harris, Graham Unangst-Rufenacht, Mollie Wills, Nick Seifert

At 5:30 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Martin

Changes or additions to the agenda: Community Supper rent, Food Shelf cooler

Public Comment: none

Minutes: The Board approved the minutes of the January 10 and January 19 Selectboard meetings as drafted and the January 17 meeting with one small change.

Inclusion: Robert Harnish addressed the Board about the inclusion initiative. He wants the leadership of the town to make a declaration of inclusion and set an example for the town. He read a suggested statement condemning discrimination in all its forms. Rich moved to adopt the motion as suggested:

“The Town of Marshfield condemns racism and welcomes all persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age or disability and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community.

As a town, we formally condemn discrimination in all its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all our actions, policies and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

The Town of Marshfield is and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions.”

Chris seconded. Michele is opposed to the motion – she feels that Marshfield is already an open place and sees no reason to make a statement to say that we are what we are. Her kids are blended and they never experienced any discrimination. Rich disagreed – his daughter experienced discrimination when she was in the town. He feels that there are people in town that are not open-minded. The motion passed 2-1.

Energy: Nick Seifert noted that the solar arrays are 10 years old in February so there will be changes to the bills.

Marshfield Dam: Nick addressed the Board about the Dam. Jason Lisai from GMP has explained to Nick what changes have been made, including remote operations and operational changes. There is still a stop-log gate on the emergency spillway. This configuration does not allow them to control the level, but GMP feels that this design is adequate. Nick is arranging a tour, and would like to have a forum at a later Selectboard meeting to ask questions about emergency planning and the emergency gate.

Harris Zoning Issue: The Board received letters from Graham Unangst-Rufenacht and Ben Hewitt regarding the Harris Zoning issue. Rich stated that one of the letters stated that the town won't allow the camp to happen, but that is not true. Henry applied for a permit once, and it was granted. It has been suggested that he apply for a permit for multiple years, but he has not done that. Henry stated that he was working with the Zoning Administrator on a permanent change of use permit when he received the notice of the lawsuit. The Selectboard indicated that their intention was never to stop the camps – it was to make sure the camps went through the proper zoning review. The Board referred him to the latest settlement agreement that has been sent to his attorney. He feels that the conditions in the stipulation are too stringent. Rich stated that he should suggest a different settlement. Graham suggested that Henry's property is a farm and that should be taken into account. Rich explained that Henry should ask the Dept of Agriculture for a letter stating that the camp is an accessory farm business, but it still needs to go through town review. Graham feels that the court case is an extreme measure that is out of proportion with the violation. Bobbi explained that the court is the only means the Town has to enforce zoning. Henry feels that the court case should not say that the town is threatening a permanent injunction – if the case just said that he had to pay fines, he would have paid them. He is not holding his camp this year because the case that is pending says the town wants a permanent injunction. He asked if the Board could meet with him and the two attorneys to hash this out. The Board is agreeable to a meeting.

Recreation Forum Review: Rich gave the Selectboard a recap of the forum. The forum was well-attended and very successful. There were 50 people in attendance each day. Consultants will put together an implementation plan and it will get refined over the next three committee meetings.

Library Porch and Picnic Shelter: Rich has developed a request for proposals for the two projects. The Board discussed whether or not the Town can afford both projects. Bids will be due Feb. 28. Rich is looking at another AARP grant to cover some of the shelter expenses, such as picnic tables or the water/electric.

Upper Depot Bridge: Bids will be due Feb. 28

Railbed Resurfacing: Rich notified the Board that Greg Western from Cross Vermont Trail secured a grant for \$10,000 for materials for the railbed, for the section between the new parking area and the Bailey Pond Road. The Road Crew could do the work. Rich asked if the Selectboard would approve using some ARPA funds if the \$10,000 isn't enough. The Board agreed that the Road Crew could use up to \$5,000 more if needed for materials.

Food Shelf: The Selectboard reviewed the plan for the cold room that the food shelf is installing. They want the foodshelf to be responsible for any damages that are incurred when they put in the air conditioner, and the foodshelf is responsible for any state permits.

Community Suppers: The Selectboard confirmed that the Board will not charge rent for the Community Supper.

Expenses, Permits & Payroll: Selectboard members read and approved reports for General Expenses and Payroll. They approved liquor and tobacco licenses for Marshfield Convenience Plus.

The meeting adjourned at _____ p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Town Clerk

The foregoing is a true copy of the Minutes of the February 7 Selectboard Meeting.
A True Record. Attest, _____, Town Clerk
